

# How The World Was Overturned

(A review of the war that cost ten million lives, and fifty billions in property, brought twenty-seven nations to arms and ended with the crushing of Prussian autocracy.)

The pistol shot which put an end to the life of Archduke Francis Joseph, heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne, at Sedajevo, June 28, 1914, turned Europe into a battlefield six weeks later. The Serbians were blamed for the assassination, and on July 23 Vienna sent an ultimatum to Belgrade demanding the punishment of the offenders and Austria's participation in their trial in Serbia.

Russia supported Serbia in rejecting the last demand; Germany supported Austria, England, France, and even Italy, then the ally of Austria and Germany, suggested arbitration by the Great powers. By treaty Germany was obliged to support Austria if attacked by two or more powers. By treaty France was obliged to support Russia for a similar reason. By treaty Italy was obliged to support her allies in case of a defensive war.

Germany deemed Russia's mobilization tantamount to a declaration of war against her and declared war on August 1. Alleging that France had already begun hostile action against her, Germany declared war on France on August 23. Germany invaded Belgium in order to attack France, thereby turning to a "scrap of paper" Belgium's covenant of neutrality to which Germany was a partner. Great Britain declared war on Germany on August 4. Italy, deeming Austria the aggressor, proclaimed her neutrality.

But these were merely the surface expressions of a long standing conspiracy on the part of Germany and Austria-Hungary soon to be revealed by German propaganda. Germany wished to render France impotent and absorb the Germanic provinces of Russia; she would then be in a position to fight or coerce the power Great Britain enjoyed by reason of the latter's predominance at sea. Austria-Hungary wished to absorb the Balkan Slavs and make her way to the Aegean. For Germany there was a corollary to the success of the Austro-Hungarian scheme, which, by the bribery of Turkey, would establish German dominion from the North Sea to the Persian gulf. In November Turkey entered the war on the side of the central empires.

All this was arranged, even to the minutest detail, at the German kaiser's Potsdam conference on July 5. There it was believed that if the corollary did not come into evidence too soon both Great Britain and Italy would remain neutral. That Japan would enter the war on account of her treaty with Great Britain was thus discounted.

Germany attempted to defend her position morally on the ground that she had been attacked by Russia on account of the Pan-Slavonic ambitions of that empire and by Great Britain on account of the latter's jealousy of her world trade and industry. She was, therefore, "fighting for her existence."

Her enemies in defending themselves entered into treaties for mutual advantages after the war, in case of the defeat of the central empires. There was co-operation, but no great unity of action or purpose among them. This gave Germany a great advantage until the spring of 1917, when the United States entered the war. That event, besides bringing the material deciding factor to the allies' cause, established their war aims upon a world basis of a fight for humanity—or republicanism against absolutism, for the rights of small nations, and "to make the world safe for democracy." All this was to be done by

annihilating Prussian militarism and Hohenzollern absolutism.

On these humane principles twenty-nine nations arrayed themselves against Germany, of which twenty-four declared war.

The war, which has now brought to the stage of practical application the principles of which the enemies of Germany have been fighting, has been prodigious in geographic and social extent and unprecedented in expenditure of lives and treasure. Through battle, atrocities and massacres it is estimated that 10,000,000 lives have been sacrificed; that \$50,000,000,000 of property, not including the wastage of material, has been destroyed in various ways; that the productive wealth of the belligerents, which in 1914 was estimated at \$600,000,000,000, has now been mortgaged for over \$200,000,000,000, much of which now seems unrecoverable.

Germany's initial plan was to place France hors de combat and then obtain a victorious peace over Russia. Austria-Hungary, meanwhile, would attend to the Balkans. The intervention of Great Britain brought this to nought. Germany then directed Turkey to attack Egypt and the Suez canal, and so strangle Great Britain in the east.

The first act of Great Britain was to isolate the German fleet; the second to send an expeditionary force under the command of Sir John French to Belgium and France. The Germans advanced into France within fifteen miles of Paris, and were then driven back to the Aisne at the battle of the Marne, September 5-12, 1914. Russian armies advanced into east Prussia, were held in the center east of Posen, and overran Austria Galicia. The Turks were defeated at the Suez canal on February 24, 1915. In the following April the Austro-Germans began a drive in Galicia, which by the following November had carried them eastward to a 450-mile perpendicular extending from near Riga to the Russian frontier.

From March until October the allies attempted to gain Constantinople from the Peninsula of Gallipoli, and then withdrew to Salonica in an attempt to defend Serbia, Bulgaria having joined the central empires on September 22. Bulgaria overran Serbia and established communication between Berlin and Constantinople via the Orient Railway. Meanwhile Italy had declared war on Austria on May 23, and had invaded Austrian territory, isolating the Trentino and advancing to the river Isonzo. The Russians, advancing through the Caucasus, were defeating the Turks in Armenia.

The sinking of the Lusitania on May 7 and the atrocities of the Germans in Belgium, the Austrians and Bulgars in Serbia, the Turks in Armenia, and the criminal propaganda in the United States to prevent supplies from going to the allies all tended to lower Germany's moral standard in the war. By the naval battle off the Falkland islands on December 8, 1914, Germany's only fleet on the high seas had been put out of existence; a similar fate soon followed her commerce destroyers. Japan had taken the German leased territory of Kiaochow in China, and out of Germany's overseas possessions of 1,027,820 square miles area only German East Africa, with an area of 384,180 square miles, remained, and has been fighting down to the end of the war.

The second year of the war, 1915-1916 saw the Germans completing their occupation of the Balkans down to the Saloniki line held by the allies; there was a British defeat on the Tigris, with the surrender of Kut-el-Amara, on April 28. There were also the battle of Verdun, which began on

February 21 and cost the Germans half a million casualties; the sea fight off Jutland on May 31, which left the British navy in control of the sea; the battle of the Somme in France, July 1-November 13, which regained 170 square miles of territory and secured several strategic positions which five months later forced the great German retreat; General Brusiloff's campaign on the eastern front, which regained 7,300 square miles of territory and secured several strategic positions June 4 till December, 1916.

On August 27, 1916, Roumania entered the war on the side of Germany's enemies, and by the dawn of 1917 had been crushed. In March and April, 1917, took place the German retreat to the Hindenburg line, which surrendered to France nearly 1,500 square miles of territory. There were British victories at the ridges of Vimy and Messines, respectively April 19 and June 7, and the great attack of the French from Soissons to Rheims, which secured 100,000 prisoners. In Mesopotamia the British recovered Kut-el-Amara and on March 11 occupied Bagdad; the Arab kingdom of Hedjaz joined the allies.

But the most important events of the third year were political, however—the Russian revolution, March 15 and the entrance of the United States into the war, April 6. The former was brought about without any premeditation by the Cossacks refusing to fire on the Petrograd mob and the duma taking advantage of the situation and establishing a mild provisional government, which opened the country to destructive German propaganda and the rise of the anarchy known as Bolshevism. The moral and material grievances of the United States culminated in a series of revelations showing the latter's criminality. On January 31 she proclaimed her intensified U-boat campaign, repudiating the promise of May 4, 1916, and on February 28 came the revelation of the Zimmerman note to Mexico and Japan. Up to the time the United States declared war this country had lost by the illegal operation of the U-boats twenty-two ships, amounting to more than 70,000 tons, together with hundreds of lives, most of which, however, had met their death on other neutral ships or on the passenger ships of Germany's enemies.

Early in the fourth year of the war, November 7, 1917, saw the collapse of the Russian provisional government and the dominance of the Bolsheviks. They finally drove Russia from the war by the betrayal at Brest-Litovsk, which culminated in the treaty of peace of March 3, 1918. Roumania was forced to make peace on May 6, at Bucharest.

Other events which occupied the closing months of 1917 were equally discouraging for the allies, whose morale, however, was kept firm through the rapidly augmenting evidences of American aid, which would be decisive. Even here there was fear that this aid could not be brought overseas, due to the intensified action of the U-boats, whose toll of merchant shipping for 1917 had been in the first quarter 1,619,373 tons; in the second, 236,934; in the third, 1,494,473; and in the fourth, 1,272,943. And as yet there were no sure grounds to believe in the great victories which came to the allies a year hence.

On the western front the battle of Flanders, which had been begun by the British on July 31, ended with the capture of Passchendaele Ridge on the 6th of the following November. There was the abortive battle of Cambrai, November 20-December 5. In October Petain secured the Chemin des Dames on the Aisne front. Italy advanced over the Bainsizza to within thirty-five miles of Laibach, between August 20 and October